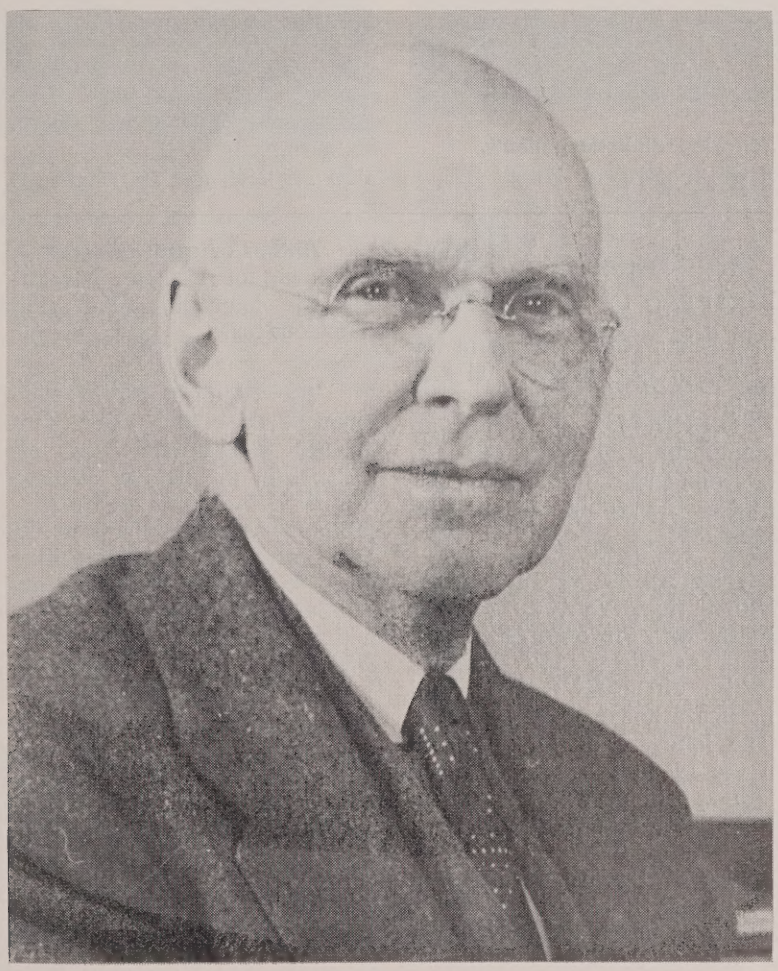
the PULSE

BOSTON, MASS. MARCH, 1962

NEW ENGLAND DEACONESS HOSPITAL

DR. ELLIOTT P. JOSLIN

1869



1962

By HOWARD F. ROOT, M.D.

Elliott Proctor Joslin, Honorary Physician-in-Chief of the New England Deaconess Hospital, Clinical Professor of Medicine, Emeritus, Harvard Medical School, and Past-president of the Harvard Medical Alumni Association, died peacefully in his sleep on Sunday, January 28, 1962, in Brookline. He was 92.

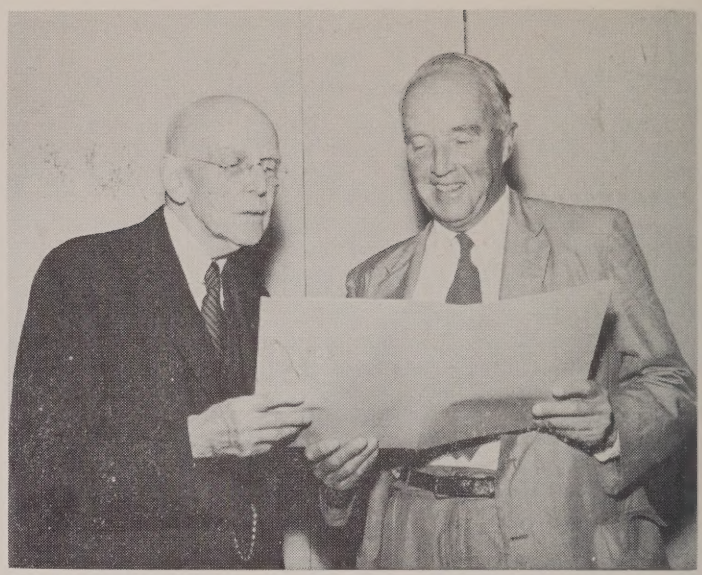
He had attended church that morning, and on the preceding day had taken part in a sound film production for medical teaching entitled "Diabetes in Youth." Writing and teaching for the benefit of patients and students of medicine had continued to the end of his life, illustrating the quotation for Chaucer, engraved in the Elliott P. Joslin Auditorium at the New England Deaconess Hospital: "Gladly would he learn, and gladly teach."

As a student at the Harvard Medical School in 1893, he wrote his first paper on diabetes, and a few years later, while an intern at the Massachusetts General Hospital, he reviewed the records of all the diabetic patients admitted to that institution from 1823 to 1898. His devotion to the study and treatment of diabetes and diabetic patients became his major medical interest. Many other responsibilities claimed him during his long career on the staff of the Boston City Hospital and as a member of the faculty of the Harvard Medical School.

His childhood was spent in Oxford, Massachusetts. As a boy he rode horseback to attend school at Leicester Academy, boarded himself and his horse 'til Friday, and then rode the twelve miles home. Love of horses continued throughout his life, and for years he had polo ponies on his farm, "Buffalo

(Continued on Page 2)

FAMILIAR SETTING — Teaching diabetic patients.



FAMED PHYSICIANS — Dr. Joslin, first to administer insulin in New England, and Dr. Charles H. Best, co-discoverer of insulin.

DR. JOSLIN

(Continued from Page 1)

Bill", in Oxford. For more than half a century this farm was the center of his family life in spring, summer, and fall. Even more absorbing than his scientific interests were his deep and abiding family loyalties. His wife, Elizabeth, three children, Mary, Allen and Elliott, nine grandchildren, and nine great-grandchildren, survive him. Mrs. Joslin often welcomed twenty or more members of the family and guests at dinner on a summer Sunday.

Dr. Joslin was particularly appreciative of his teachers and colleagues. After graduation from Yale, he spent a fortunate year working as a student with Professor Chittendon in chemistry. He often referred admiringly to Professor William G. Sumner, the economist. Graduated from Harvard Medical School in 1895, he became a house officer at Massachusetts General Hospital. The influence of Dr. Reginald Heber Fitz, then a Chief on the Medical Service remained potent throughout his life. An appointment at the Boston Lying-in Hospital followed.

Dr. Joslin began the practice of Internal Medicine in 1898 and soon joined the staff of the Boston City Hospital. During the next fifteen years, many an intern and resident experienced the stimulating and memorable influence of his intensely active and inquiring mind. His interest and practice in this period covered a wide field. Gastroenterology, tuberculosis, typhoid fever, and clinical pathology were subjects of numerous medical articles, much teaching at the bedside and of a far-ranging consultation practice.

A member of the staff of the New England Deaconess Hospital since its founding in 1897, he continued there actively to the day of his death. In 1952 he became Honorary Physician-in-Chief. Also, he was Consulting Physician at the Beth Israel Hospital, the Boston Lying-in Hospital as well as the Boston City Hospital.

During World War I, in 1918, Dr. Joslin served, first as major, then as Lieutenant-Colonel in the Medical Corps in the United States Army in France.

Author of many scientific articles, his books include "The Treatment of Diabetes Mellitus", Tenth Edition, 1959; "A Diabetic Manual", Tenth Edition, 1960, and sections in numerous texts.

The establishment of the Nutrition Laboratory of the Carnegie Institution under the directorship of Dr. Francis G. Benedict began many years of intense investigation of the metabolism of diabetes. This association with Dr. Benedict was always remembered by Dr. Joslin with gratitude and appreciation of his untiring devotion. The publication of three books resulted: 1, "Metabolism in Diabetes Mellitus", Pub. No. 136, 1910, Carnegie Institution of Washington, D. C. 2, "A Study of Metabolism in Severe Diabetes", Pub. No. 187, ibid., 1912; 3, "Diabetic Metabolism with High and Low Diet", Pub. No. 323, ibid., 1923.

Thanks to Drs. Frederick G. Banting and Charles H. Best of the University of Toronto, Dr. Joslin received the first insulin to be administered in New England in 1922. The first patient treated was a nurse, Miss Elizabeth Mudge, whose weight had fallen from 140 to 80 pounds. The use of insulin brought a flood of diabetic patients of equal severity. Dr. Joslin often quoted Ezekiel 37: "O ye dry bones . . . I will lay sinews upon you and will bring up flesh upon you . . . and ye shall live." A Diabetes Clinic developed at the Deaconess which expanded into the Joslin Clinic.

The Diabetes Foundation, Inc., which Dr. Joslin established in 1953 to promote research, teaching and summer camps for diabetic children, received gifts, large and small, from thousands of patients and friends. Camps for diabetic children, initiated in 1927, have grown so that in 1961, at the Clara Barton Camp for Girls, and at the Elliott P. Joslin Camp for Boys, nearly 500 diabetic youngsters were given treatment and a camping holiday.

Membership in medical and scientific societies included the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, American Philosophical Society, Association of American Physicians and many others. Honorary memberships in foreign medical societies were also bestowed. Other awards included honorary

DREAM REALIZED — Laying cornerstone for Diabetes Foundation, Inc., building, site of Joslin Clinic and Hospital Teaching Unit.

degrees of Doctor of Science from Harvard University and the University of Toronto, the Distinguished Service Medal of the American Medical Association, Honorary Doctor of Medicine from the Medical Academy of Dusseldorf, the Cross of the Order of Leopold II by the Belgian Government (1919), the Banting Medal of the American Diabetes Association, the General Wood Medal of the Boston City Hospital, the Kober Foundation Award, the J. Howard Reber Medal of the Philadelphia Metabolic Association and the Beloved Physician award of the Massachusetts and Boston Councils of Churches (1959). The Claude Bernard Medal of the International Diabetes Federation (Dusseldorf 1958) carried the inscription of his French honorary titles: "Membre de l'Academie Francaise, de l'Academie des Sciences, Professeur au College de France, au Museum, Commandeur de la Legion d'Honneur."

Other interests during his teaching years included the Library of the Harvard Medical School where he served as Chairman of the Committee on Library for many years. He instituted the first physical examination of all medical students of the Harvard Medical School which was carried out under the chairmanship of Dr. Roger I. Lee. While president of the Harvard Medical Alumni Association, and with the help of Dr. Francis M. Rackemann, he led the campaign for funds which resulted in the building of Vanderbilt Hall Dormitory. His fondness for poetry, for the Bible, and other literature led to frequent quotations, as from William James or Milton, for the benefit of students and residents. Engraved on the walls of the Baker Clinic Research Laboratory appear the following lines which he selected:

"Who learns and learns
But does not what he knows
Is one who plows and plows
Yet never sows."

He found great delight in seeing the results of laboratory and clinical research translated into improved methods of treatment for patients. Dr. Joslin's gift of appreciating the best qualities in others endeared him forever to patients and friends without number.

THE OFFICE — Dr. Joslin in his favored surroundings.

BELOVED BY PATIENTS — Dr. Joslin receives gift on his 88th birthday.

Funeral held at Old South Church

Funeral services for Dr. Elliott P. Joslin were held February 1, at the Old South Church, with the Rev. Dr. Frederick M. Meek, pastor, officiating and delivering the eulogy.

More than 1,200 doctors, nurses and patients — many from out of state and many from Boston's major hospitals, medical centers and universities — crowded the church for Dr. Joslin's funeral.

Ushers included Dr. Howard F. Root, Dr. Alexander Marble, Dr. Robert F. Bradley, Dr. Leo P. Krall, Dr. William B. Hadley and Dr. B. Dan Ferguson, all senior members of the Joslin Medical Staff.

Deacons of the church who also were ushers included Walter W. Davis, Dr. Leroy E. Parkins, Jay B. Angevine, Dr. Wesner Fallaw, Robert Bachman, James M. Rothwell and Clarence C. Beasley.

EULOGY FOR DR. ELLIOTT P. JOSLIN

By Rev. Dr. Frederick M. Meek, Old South Church, Feb. 1

In this Church that was so dear to him we meet for these last offices of faith and of love for Elliott P. Joslin.

The circumstances of his death on Sunday had much about them that he himself would have desired had he been able to shape the character of his last day of earthly life.

He was here on that last day, as was his custom, expressing his faith in attendance at the Sunday morning Worship Service, and characteristically in his unaffected simplicity of life, he traveled by M.T.A. He spent time at home, where his love and affection was centered. Later in the day, he turned his attention to the revision of the eleventh edition of the medical book on diabetes with which his name is always associated. In careful preparation that night he laid out his things ready for the beginning of his work on Monday. He went to sleep, and in his sleep, his spirit returned to God who gave it.

Here is a summary of his life and the summary itself suggests the dimensions of the horizons, and they were far horizons, within which his life was bounded.

His religious faith had the strength of essential and elemental simplicity. It was real to him as the physical world in which he lived, and as essential as the air that he breathed. Attendance here at divine worship was the habitual unquestioned order of his life, and even in his later days the worst of winter's weather never deterred him.

In Old South Church he brought distinction to the office of deacon, and a multitude of people from so many different places have told me that as he moved up and down the aisles of the Church, sharing the bread and the wine of the Lord's Supper with the people, his presence and his sincerity was for them a moving testimony of faith in which their own faith was strengthened.

In his home he was blessed and sustained over the years by the deep love and the devoted ministrations and care of his wife, one who herself has traveled far through time on the journey toward her eternal home. To hear how Dr. Joslin spoke of her, always using her full name, "Elizabeth", was to become in part aware of the depth of the bonds of affection between them. His family loves and loyalties were deep and abiding. But we do not open the curtain of that intimacy.

Few men in American medicine have had the love and respect of so many people — patients, medical staff and personnell — while at the same time having national and international respect and recognition that was his in his medical specialty. Let some one outside the field of medicine make this judgment: I believe that it is quite possible that we shall never again see on this scale in America this combination that we have seen in Dr. Joslin as a person.

Always he was devoted to people; they mattered beyond all else. Here in his profession he was an embodiment of that individual concern for individual that marked the earthly life of his Lord. He believed in the capacity of people, and he gave time and effort to teaching them to use their own capacities, and his concerned encouragement and his personalized interest gave courage and hope and a new sense of direction literally to thousands of his patients.

The quotation from Chaucer's "Canterbury Tales" which he had inscribed on the walls of the clinic was eminently fitting: "Gladly would he learn and gladly teach".

Dr. Joslin's capacity for work and his own diligence left most of us, his junior by decades, envious, even humbled, and stirred to emulation.

And when he chose an inscription for the hospital walls, he was unconsciously describing his own attitude: "Who learns and learns, yet does not what he knows, is one who ploughs and ploughs, yet never sows."

Knowledge for him was something to be used as a tool for the benefit of people. In his work there was a thoroughness as if he were never to have the opportunity to review what he had done, and perchance this saying of the Bishop of Seville (inscribed on the clinic walls) is a summary of his attitude: "Work as though you would live forever, Live as if you would die tomorrow."

Always he was selfless, unassuming, with a humility that at times would lead him to apologize for taking another person's time (as if any of us did not appreciate the chance to listen to what he said.)

He had a questioning curiosity that in my experience was unique. It seemed to probe every unknown and unrecognized fact that he encountered in any field. Add to this a meticulous attention to detail, and the load of work that he carried becomes in part understandable.

Dr. Joslin dreamed his dreams — and he never ceased to dream — and then he built foundations under them. This was the pattern of his living.

To have lived through the changing panorama of medicine for seventy years, to have been an important figure in that changing panorama, to have served his fellow men, and to have won the gratitude and respect and affection of an uncounted multitude, is to have lived a life that cannot be forgotten.

In Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress" Bunyan portrays the Pilgrims after the hardship of their pilgrimage, ready to enter the Celestial City, and the summons comes for Valiant for truth — and this is an apt name for him whom we remember this day. Bunyan said: "When he understood it, he called for his friends and told them of it. Then said he, 'I am going to my Father's, and though with great difficulty I have got hither, yet now do I not repent me of all the trouble I have been at to arrive where I am. My sword I give to him that shall succeed me in my pilgrimage, and my courage and skill to him that can get it. My marks and scars I carry with me, to be a witness for me that I have fought His battles Who will be my Rewarder."

"When the day that he must go home was come, many accompanied him to the riverside . . . so he passed over, and all the trumpets sounded for him on the other side."

And so, here in this Church, so dear to his heart, and where he came so frequently to meet his God, on this day of remembrance and thanksgiving, we commend him to God's keeping and God's care, knowing that after the welcome of the trumpets, he will hear the words of our New Testament: "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."